

MINUTES, HUMAN SERVICES ADVISORY COMMITTEE

MARCH 21, 2012

PRESENT: Ron Baker (First Baptist Church), at large; Jane Blanshard (Disabilities), secretary; Dexter Eddy (Housing Authority); Kevin Grunwald (ex officio); Lorraine Kenowski, at large; Bev Korba (Senior Center); Ethel Mantzaris (YSB), Chair; Victoria Nimirowski (WAIM),

ABSENT: Sara Anderson (Advocates for Children); Joan Terry (Commission on Aging).

Meeting called to order at 2:03. The minutes of the February meeting were accepted.

Agency funding requests were discussed. Kevin submits these recommendations to the Town Manager, who will incorporate them into his budget requests. Most of the recommendations were on a sheet Kevin distributed. Those remaining to be considered were CT Legal Services, which had asked for \$1000 more than last year. Jane had recommended approval. The group approved. Sexual Assault Crisis Center had been reviewed by Bev. She had been amazed by the amount of work they do.

United Services is asking for much more this year, an increase from \$8000 to \$18000: Kevin says they are using more current census figures. Previous figures were from 17 years ago. They don't get money from Windham where many of their clients probably live, though they get it from many other towns. It was decided that we should not undertake such a big increase, so it was agreed to give them \$10000. Kevin said that the Council has been trying to keep funding level, but there is a possibility that they might increase or decrease the amount. Veterans Advisory also asked for a fairly large increase; they base their requests on per capita expenditure. The program is totally funded by communities, especially Mansfield and Windham. It was decided to give them \$11000, especially considering the increase in the number of veterans. WAIM asked for

\$500 more than last year. Victoria recused herself. We agreed to give them the requested \$3000. Victoria reminded us that WAIM keeps a lot of stuff out of the landfill and saves the town money that way. The No Freeze shelter asked for less than last year, because it had served only three Mansfield residents. It was agreed to fund the full amount, \$1200.

Kevin reported on Human Services activities in the past month. They are talking to landlords about the dangers of Spring Weekend, and reminding them of ordinances that cover the situation. Off-campus student rentals must be registered with the town. The town supposedly inspects every other year. Many violations discovered are electrical. Teams from the town and university go out to visit the off-campus rentals, starting next week.

Youth Services had a volunteer recognition ceremony, which was well attended and very successful. The volunteers said how much the program had meant to them, as did some of the children.

They are trying to entice younger seniors to the Senior Center with a greater variety of programming. Joe Courtney is coming on May 3 to talk about changes in Medicare and Medicaid. No physician in Mansfield accepts patients on Medicare only.

A Design Day is scheduled to discuss playground construction. Mansfield Advocates for Children is working on this.

Budget Process: The manager is taking his proposals to the Town Council on the 26th. The town meeting is May 8. There is a referendum process that allows for a vote on whether the education budget and/or the town budget was too high or too low. Jane pointed out that a third choice is needed: just right.

Kevin distributed a summary of the department's mission statement, involving strategic planning. We must acknowledge that we can't provide all things to all people. We need to figure out if another organization can provide services that we can't undertake. We need to prioritize and get input from everyone who needs services. Jane said that we need to find out what people in outlying parts of the town need in terms of getting to

doctors, etc. Kevin wondered if human services should provide that service. Maybe another agency should do it, such as WRTD. Mansfield's representative to the transit district is Paul Aho. Do other towns we are comparing Mansfield to have any transportation programs? Kevin said that if our committee feels that this is a priority we should find out whether people want transportation to be a significant part of our mission. We have to prioritize. We must decide if this falls within the department's mission? Bev suggested that we must start asking these questions because it will be such a long process.

Victoria suggested that we plan a meeting on senior transportation. We need to find out whether there are people out there who need it. Kevin said surveys don't necessarily work well. He suggested a series of focus groups, which collect people with an interest. There is data we can access, such as Gianna's figures on her services. We need to include other issues before we focus on one. Ethel suggested that he talk to his department heads to find out what they think priority issues are. Churches, home-care agencies, etc. should be included in this search for requests. Kevin will talk to the department heads before the next meeting.

Meeting adjourned at 2:57. Next meeting: April 18.

Respectfully submitted, Jane Blanshard